

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claim 1 (Currently Amended) A polishing apparatus comprising:

at least three load-unload stages each for placing a wafer cassette which accommodates a plurality of wafers;

a robot which moves along said at least three load-unload stages, for accessing said respective wafer cassettes;

a polishing unit for polishing a plurality of wafers simultaneously;

a cleaning and drying unit for cleaning and drying ~~a~~ the polished wafer; and

a dummy wafer station for holding at least one dummy wafer or at least one quality control wafer wherein said robot and said cleaning and drying unit are disposed between said load-unload stages and said polishing unit.

Claim 2 (Original) A polishing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said robot is movable along a rail disposed in said polishing apparatus.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended) A polishing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said polishing unit comprises a plurality of top rings each for holding a respective ~~the~~ wafer respectively during polishing operation.

Claim 4 (Original) A polishing apparatus according to claim 3, wherein said polishing unit comprises a plurality of polishing tables each for providing a polishing surface for the wafer.

Claim 5 (Original) A polishing apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising another robot for transferring the wafer in a space between said load-unload stages and said polishing unit.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended) A polishing apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising:
at least three load-unload stages each for placing a wafer cassette which accommodates a plurality of wafers;

a robot which moves along said at least three load-unload stages, for accessing said respective wafer cassettes;

a polishing unit for polishing a plurality of wafers simultaneously;

a cleaning and drying unit for cleaning and drying a polished wafer; and

a transporter for handling a plurality of the wafers at one time, and for moving ~~a~~ the wafer to a preferable position below a top ring which holds the wafer during polishing operation;

wherein said robot and said cleaning and drying unit are disposed between said load-unload stages and said polishing unit.

Claim 7 (Original) A polishing apparatus according to claim 6, wherein said transporter transfers the wafers to a plurality of the top rings.

Claim 8 (Original) A polishing apparatus according to claim 6, further comprising a pusher disposed below said transporter for elevating the wafer on said transporter to the top ring.

Claim 9 (Original) A polishing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said cleaning and drying unit comprises at least three cleaning apparatuses for cleaning the wafer.

Claim 10 (Original) A polishing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said load-unload stages, said robot, said cleaning and drying unit, and said polishing unit are disposed in order from one side of the polishing apparatus.

Claim 11 (Original) A polishing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein a partition is provided between said polishing unit and said cleaning and drying unit.

Claim 12 (Original) A polishing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein a partition is provided between said load-unload stages and said cleaning and drying unit.

Claim 13 (Currently Amended) A polishing apparatus comprising: according to claim 12,
at least three load-unload stages each for placing a wafer cassette which accommodates a
plurality of wafers;

a robot which moves along said at least three load-unload stages for accessing said respective
wafer cassettes;

a polishing unit for polishing a plurality of wafers simultaneously;

a cleaning and drying unit for cleaning and drying a polished wafer; and

a partition provided between said load-unload stages and said cleaning and drying unit,

wherein said robot and said cleaning and drying unit are disposed between said load-unload
stages and said polishing unit, and

wherein a pressure of a space in which said cleaning and drying unit is disposed is adjusted
so as to be lower than a pressure of a space in which said load-unload stages are disposed.

Claim 14 (Currently Amended) A polishing apparatus according to claim 13, wherein a pressure
of a space in which said polishing unit is disposed is adjusted so as to be lower than a pressure of the
a space in which said cleaning and drying unit is disposed.

Claim 15 (New) A polishing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said dummy wafer station
holds said at least one dummy wafer, and said at least one dummy wafer is a substrate for use in
stabilizing a polishing cloth in said polishing unit before a product wafer is processed.

Claim 16 (New) A polishing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said dummy wafer station
holds said at least one quality control wafer, and said at least one quality control wafer is a substrate
for confirming the status or condition of said polishing apparatus.

Claim 17 (New) A polishing apparatus of claim 1, wherein said dummy wafer station comprises
a substrate detection sensor for confirming the presence of a substrate in said dummy wafer station.

Claim 18 (New) A polishing apparatus of claim 1, wherein said dummy wafer station is disposed below said load-unload stages.